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Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

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Monday, 17 July 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Melki
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Kyslytsa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2299 (2016) (S/2017/592)

Fifteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/596)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2299 (2016) (S/2017/592)

Fifteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/596)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/592, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2299 (2016), and document S/2017/596, which contains the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: On 10 July, Prime Minister Al-Abadi announced the liberation of Mosul, attributing that victory to the Iraqi security forces' planning and execution as the only fighting force present on the ground. Praising the Iraqi security forces, including the popular mobilization forces, as well as the Peshmerga and tribal and local volunteers, he also thanked all the countries that supported Iraq in the war on terrorism.

Our prayers and thoughts go to all those killed and wounded, military and civilians both, and to their loved ones. It is critical that the families of the martyrs and wounded receive the necessary support.

Per Prime Minister Al-Abadi's directives, the liberation operation was marked by an exceptional effort on the part of the liberation forces and their international partners to save and protect the civilian population. By adopting a humanitarian concept of operations, they reduced civilian losses and suffering. They also showed a readiness to hold themselves and others accountable for any violations.

In stark contrast, Da'esh terrorists have shown absolute disregard for human lives and civilization. They booby-trapped and destroyed houses and infrastructure as well as religious and cultural monuments, including the iconic monument of Islamic civilization, the Great Al-Nuri mosque and its Al-Hadba minaret. They deliberately targeted civilians, indiscriminately shelling them in the liberated areas, using them as human shields, locking them in their homes and using rooftop snipers to kill people — women, children and men — attempting to flee to safety. They butchered them by using suicide bombers, who included females and brainwashed children, including in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The fighting in Mosul has also claimed the lives of numerous local and international journalists. Their sacrifices have not been in vain; free and impartial media are essential to safeguard the public interest and to ensure the necessary degree of transparency and accountability. Here I wish also to acknowledge the access that the Iraqi authorities, including those of the Kurdistan region, provided for both national and international media during the Mosul campaign.

The historic liberation of Mosul should not overshadow the fact that the road ahead is extremely challenging. Reclaiming the remaining territories still under Da'esh control in other parts of Ninawa and Anbar governorates; in Hawijah, Kirkuk governorate; and in pockets in other governorates will not be easy. Moreover, Da'esh supporters continue their vicious terrorist activities against civilians in Iraq and beyond.

Hand in hand with liberation comes demining, stabilization and reconstruction so as to enable the return of IDPs as well as the elimination of Da'esh cells, criminal gangs and militias operating outside of the control of the Government. The enforcement of law and order, the rule of law, justice and accountability, as well as reforms, good governance and development, including in the southern provinces, is also crucial. To turn the gains of the military victory into stability, security, justice and development, the Government will have to do everything possible to give the people back their lives in security and dignity. To achieve that, Iraq will continue to need substantial regional and

international support. Victory cannot be achieved by just supporting the military campaign.

It is encouraging that the recent regional tour of Prime Minister Al Abadi in June to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait confirmed the willingness of those countries to continue and enhance their support. I pay tribute to all Iraq's partners, including those from the international anti-Da'esh coalition, and urge them to continue to stand with Iraq and its people and to continue providing support.

Da'esh's ultimate defeat can be secured only through inclusive solutions and by addressing the grievances, needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people. A national settlement and societal reconciliation are indispensable parts of a broader comprehensive effort towards achieving long-term unity, stability and prosperity.

I applaud the guidance of the Marja'iya religious authorities who, in their victory sermons, stressed that Iraqis need to learn from what happened in the years before Da'esh and remedy the long-standing problems. Furthermore, they stated that using violence, oppression and sectarianism as a means to an end only causes destruction and leaves the country vulnerable to interference by regional and international actors, where there is no winner and Iraq is first among the losers; that all those in positions of power and Government have to work according to a principle that sees all citizens as equal in their rights and duties regardless of religion, sect, ethnicity or nationality. Were that approach implemented strictly, it would restore the people's trust in the Government and its institutions. The Marja'iya's statements also mentioned the need to combat financial and administrative corruption, and sect- and party-linked quotas, and to ensure standards of competence and professionalism in the appointment of Government officials.

The United Nations is committed to further facilitating processes of national settlement and grassroots societal reconciliation, in full coordination with the Government of Iraq and in cooperation with all Iraqi stakeholders, including women and youth, to address the concerns of all components, communities, groups and citizens in a manner that is just and fair.

At a meeting, on 7 June, of political parties in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, chaired by President Barzani, a decision was made to hold a referendum on 25 September with the question: "Do you want the Kurdistan region and the Kurdistani disputed areas outside the administration of the Kurdistan region to become an independent state?" On 11 July, President Barzani reiterated, during his address to the European Parliament in Brussels, the determination to hold the referendum as planned, while maintaining that no country had clearly opposed it.

Such an important issue ought not to be pursued without a common understanding between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. In line with the recommendations of Secretary-General Guterres, I urge both parties to enter into negotiations without further delay, in the spirit of genuine partnership and based on the Constitution, to urgently find common ground and a road map to address this and other critical topics, notably the implementation of article 140 of the Constitution, on disputed territories, including the status of Kirkuk, budgetary issues, oil and revenue sharing, and other areas and principles that determine the relations between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The absence of meaningful political dialogue and negotiations could turn a conflict of interests into a different kind of conflict.

Complex electoral processes loom in Iraq, including in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, this and next year. On 21 June, the Independent High Electoral Commission informed that it will not be able to conduct the governorate council elections as scheduled on 16 September. It is of primary importance that all the necessary measures be taken to ensure, first, that the Council of Representatives elections be held at the latest in May 2018, as required by the Constitution, and, secondly, that the governorate council elections be rescheduled.

The cumulative number of people displaced since military operations began in October is now nearing 1 million individuals, although the rate at which people are fleeing the fighting has slowed in recent weeks.

Under the United Nations Development Programme Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization, by July 2017 more than 1,050 projects were under way or had been completed in 23 liberated towns and districts in Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Kirkuk governorates. Now that Mosul has been fully liberated, the scope of projects there will increase exponentially.

Of particular concern is the rising popular sentiment in favour of collective punishment of families

perceived to be associated with Da'esh. Countrywide, Iraqis perceived to have links with Da'esh are being increasingly subjected to evictions, the confiscation of homes, and other retribution and revenge measures. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) has recommended that the Prime Minister take urgent steps, within his prerogative, to maintain the rule of law and order and halt evictions and vindictive acts.

UNAMI has prioritized accountability to provide justice to individuals affected by human rights violations and abuses committed in the ongoing armed conflict. Given the large scale of serious crimes, UNAMI is pursuing a strategy at the national level with a view to allowing domestic courts to have jurisdiction over international crimes. That would also complement international initiatives to gather evidence on the most serious crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

As the fight to eliminate Da'esh from Iraq comes to a close, the United Nations is repositioning its responses to sexual violence with a focus on supporting survivors of sexual violence in reintegrating back into their communities. I welcome the renewed commitment of the Government of Iraq to ensuring the implementation of the joint communiqué and the national action plan.

The United Nations, at the highest levels, has engaged with senior Iraqi officials on the establishment of the Interministerial Committee on Grave Child Rights Violations. The Committee is expected to provide a forum to coordinate a response by the Iraqi authorities with regard to issues pertaining to children in armed conflict, including occasional reports of recruitment and the use of children by pro-Government forces. Furthermore, we urge the Government of Iraq to ensure that children arrested by security forces, including for terrorism-related charges, are transferred to juvenile institutions.

The Mission continues to work with the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government towards the implementation of the Iraqi national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) where funding limitations have impeded its implementation. I call on international partners to pledge support in particular to specialized programmes for women and female-headed households.

The issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property was one of the key topics of the visit of Prime Minister Al-Abadi to Kuwait on 21 June. In a meeting with the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the parties discussed means to settle all outstanding issues related to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

On 22 and 24 May, Iraq, for the first time in 14 years, successfully hosted in Baghdad the ninety-ninth session of the Technical Subcommittee of the tripartite mechanism, and the forty-fourth session of the Tripartite Commission. I echo the statement (SC/12870) issued by the Security Council, on 14 June, calling on Iraq and Kuwait to continue their cooperation through the tripartite mechanism and to depend on steadfast commitment, action and the adoption of new and innovative ways to push this file forward.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his informative and comprehensive briefing and thank him and his entire time for their ongoing work in the context of such a difficult field of operations such as Iraq.

Uruguay recognizes the arduous work of the Special Representative and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) carry out in close collaboration with the Government of Iraq, which has enabled them to tackle the various emergencies the country faces. The Security Council's trust in that process was manifest on Friday when we unanimously adopted resolution 2367 (2017) — extending the UNAMI mandate for another year, until July 2018.

After nine months of tough combat and many Council meetings, we are finally hearing the news of the liberation of Mosul, after having been under the control of the terrorist group Da'esh for three years. Uruguay congratulates the Iraqi Government for its courage and the great efforts deployed in that campaign, as well as for this important achievement, which is not only a victory for the people and the Government of that country, but also a great step forward in the fight against international terrorism.

My country trusts that this important milestone against Da'esh, which must be safeguarded without letting our guard down, can serve as a decisive step in the permanent defeat of that group — which has committed countless abominations and has brutalized

the people under its control since it emerged in 2014. It is worth noting that the Iraqi and the Syrian peoples have suffered unimaginable atrocities, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and even possible genocide, perpetrated against religious minorities — most notably, but probably not exclusively against the Yazidi people, who were subjected to a brutal extermination campaign.

As the entire Council expressed in the press statement of 13 July (SC/12911), it is now time to convey our condolences over the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, Syrians and other nationalities that have been the victims of the crimes of Da'esh — which must not, under any circumstance, remain unpunished. We must also note that Da'esh did not arise out of a vacuum, but was rather a product of a series of unfortunate events, the first of which was the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which lacked both multilateral legitimacy and the backing of the Council. That, in turn, as we are all aware, led to many years of sectarian civil war that ravaged the country. Moreover, the situation was exacerbated by the ideological, financial, military and troop support that some countries — both from the region and outside of it — provided to Da'esh. The spirit of fighting terrorism and the solidarity with the Iraqi people must be a top priority at this stage. Let us learn from errors of the past so that we do not repeat them.

The liberation of Mosul has now generated two enormous tasks that the Government of Iraq, with the support of the United Nations, must address in the near future — the gradual rebuilding of the city and the return of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, many of whom will find that their homes have been destroyed and that basic services must be restored. Last Thursday, we bore witness on television to a little girl, Hanan, in a totally barren paediatric hospital in Mosul, who died from entirely treatable renal failure. We encourage the Iraqi Government to prioritize the protection of civilians, just as we have on other occasions in previous months during its offensive in Mosul, so that they can help the millions of people beset by war and terrorism. Moreover, the United Nations should support the Iraqi Government's reform campaign to attain long-term political solutions that will help fight extremism and ensure the country's stability so as to prevent the recurrence of a phenomenon like Da'esh.

Political leaders must overcome their historic divisions and distrust with a view to achieving a broad national reconciliation agreement that can turn the page on so many years of suffering of the Iraqi people due to sectarian and religious divisions. We reiterate that the war against the scourge of terrorism must be waged within the framework of international humanitarian law and human rights and coordinated at the United Nations in order to prevent atrocities similar to those committed by those groups.

We are gratified that the renewed UNAMI mandate calls for the empowerment of women for the immediate future of the country. In that regard, we call on the Iraqi Government to promote and defend the rights of women and girls, and to promote gender equality, bolster women's political engagement and address the urgent problem of the use of sexual violence in conflict as a war tactic and terrorist act.

As of today, Iraq faces a new and transcendent chapter in its history. Victory against Da'esh will be insufficient if the Iraqi authorities do not make progress in the fight against corruption, the political involvement of civil society and the enjoyment of rights for all Iraqi citizens. It will be up to the authorities, with the support of UNAMI and the Council, to consolidate the agreed reforms so as to bring about a more modern, inclusive and peaceful Iraq.

Mr. Kyslytsa (Ukraine): Before going into the subject matter of today's discussion, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues around this table that today, 17 July, the world commemorates World Day for International Justice. Also, it was three years ago today that the world learned of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. Today our thoughts and prayers are with the families and loved ones of every victim of that tragedy. We also appreciate the attention the Secretary-General gave to the matter in his statement today on this sad anniversary. To ensure justice for its victims and accountability for its perpetrators, important steps have been taken recently. On 5 July, the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General were informed, through document S/2017/580, about the joint decision of the joint investigation team countries that the prosecution and trial of those responsible for this atrocious crime would take place in the Netherlands. On 7 July, Ukraine and the Netherlands signed a bilateral treaty on international legal cooperation in relation to the downing of Flight MH-17. In that regard, we urge all States to take steps to ensure full compliance with Council resolution 2166 (2014), which demands that all States cooperate fully with efforts to establish accountability.

Turning to the subject under consideration today, we note with great satisfaction that a significant milestone was reached in stabilizing Iraq with the recent liberation of Mosul. It is a welcome and much-anticipated development that the Government of Iraq, together with the coalition forces, succeeded in its military operation. We hope that this victory over the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) will accelerate its final elimination from the region.

However, those gains have come at a very high price, since the operation has had severe effects on civilians in the area. The humanitarian situation in the liberated city remains dire, since much of Mosul lies in ruins and a considerable number of people are still trapped in the old city. Beyond that, in the city's general vicinity, there is another serious challenge represented by the 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who want to return to their homes but who in some cases have nothing left to return to. In that regard, we encourage the Government of Iraq to work with its partners on post-liberation initiatives aimed at rebuilding vital infrastructure, ensuring respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, focusing on national reconciliation and facilitating IDPs' safe and voluntary return to their homes. We realize the extent of the difficulties associated with such a momentous task and hope that the Iraqi Government will receive the assistance and support it so badly needs in mobilizing the resources it requires to address those challenges.

Ukraine is encouraged by the commitment of Iraqi stakeholders, who have been working tirelessly on a national reconciliation process aimed at uniting the people of Iraq, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. Only an inclusive national reconciliation effort can heal the wounds that the country has sustained and help to achieve a lasting national settlement. In addition, proper attention must be given to the issue of accountability for all those who committed crimes against the civilian population during the conflict. There can be no place for victor's justice, which would undermine the national reconciliation process. We also emphasize how important it is for the Government of Iraq, with the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and its international partners, to conduct comprehensive security-sector reform, with the goal of establishing trained, professional defence and security forces committed to carrying out their duties on a basis of human rights and humanitarian principles. That aspect is critical, since it will help to prevent sectarian violence in the area and avoid any repetition of the events that occurred in Ramadi and Fallujah after they were liberated.

Lastly, I would like to say that I believe that in the near future the Government of Iraq will announce ISIL's final defeat on Iraqi soil in this Chamber, something that we will all gladly welcome.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for his briefing, and to assure him of our full support to him in implementing the tasks with which he is entrusted. We are also grateful for the key role played by UNAMI in fulfilling its mandate, which we just renewed through the unanimous adoption on 14 July of resolution 2367 (2017). We urge it to continue its work in coordinating and encouraging dialogue with the goal of strengthening the process of peace and reconciliation in Iraq.

We welcomed the Iraqi Government's announcement on 10 July confirming the liberation of the city of Mosul from Da'esh control. We recognize the profound courage, sacrifice and determination that the security forces and the people of Iraq in general have continued to show in their fight to eliminate that terrorist group's presence in their country once and for all. We also acknowledge the interim precautionary and protective measures that the Iraqi security forces have taken in their campaign against Da'esh in order to prioritize the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. We would like to emphasize that as long as this terrorist group is still being expelled from the territory of Iraq and people are being liberated from its control, it is vital to ensure that there is full and unrestricted humanitarian access to United Nations aid and that the human rights of those caught up in the conflict steps are respected and upheld.

According to the reports issued on 4 July by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to date, since the start of anti-terrorist operations in Mosul in October 2016, more than 900,000 internally displaced persons have been registered as coming from that city alone, 709,000 of whom are still unable to return home, in addition to the more than 3.4 million people who have been displaced internally since the conflict began. Furthermore, according to the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/592), 445,000 civilians have died just in

the period from May to June of this year, bringing the total number of deaths resulting from the conflict to some 82,000.

We are also concerned about the information in the report about serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by Da'esh such as mass burials of civilians, abductions and the sexual enslavement of thousands of women. It has used improvised explosive devices and carried out suicide attacks in squares, markets and other very crowded areas, as well as using innocent civilians as human shields. In that regard, we firmly condemn all acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of where, when or by whom they are committed. We particularly condemn terrorist acts that make cowardly use of civilians, especially women and children, as human shields.

We reaffirm the importance of ensuring that we combat such practices by all possible means at our disposal, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and our obligations under international law, and that those responsible for such acts are investigated, prosecuted and punished. With regard to explosive devices, we believe that while the area is still being liberated from Da'esh's control, we should focus on demining activities and on clearing all explosive remnants of war in order to ensure that the huge number of displaced persons can be returned home safely.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia would also like to pay tribute to the determination and effort of the Iraqi people to reach a political solution that will help to begin peacebuilding and to involve the Iraqi people in establishing their country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. In that regard, we hope that the electoral schedule and the legal mechanisms needed to ensure that it is met can be agreed on with the consensus of all the political parties and stakeholders involved to the benefit of the population as a whole.

We also appreciate the efforts of the Iraqi Government to identify missing Kuwaiti citizens and property and to return property taken during the conflict. We take note of the Iraqi Government's positive actions in that regard, such as the public call broadcast on mass media on 15 May inviting all those with information on missing Kuwaitis to come forward, and the explorations done in the potential burial locations of Khamisiyah and Samawah. We hope they will produce positive results. Lastly, we encourage all stakeholders to continue working to achieve concrete results through the reconciliation efforts that are so fundamental to the process of stabilizing relations between Iraq and Kuwait and which the Council discussed in its press release of 14 July.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Marzooq (Iraq): (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your organization of the Council's work, and to express our gratitude to Bolivia for its leadership of the Council last month. I would also like to welcome the briefing by Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and to thank him and his team for their efforts in both Baghdad and New York.

On 10 July, from the heart of Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq, Prime Minister Haider Al Abadi announced that Iraq's heroic armed forces had achieved a historic victory, ending the situation of illusion and extremism in the city. With enormous sacrifices, our brave forces have regained the city of Mosul and the Al-Hadba minaret, which the Takfiri terrorists demolished at the approach of the Iraqi forces. Today, I can only congratulate our armed forces and our brave people who have made sacrifices. I also congratulate all honourable citizens of the civilized world, who have supported Iraq, and its forces, in its fight against the terrorist gangs of Da'esh.

Iraq appreciates the role played by the international coalition, which offered aerial support and cooperated with the Iraqi air forces, in the battle to liberate Mosul. I should also like to thank and express gratitude to the States of the international coalition, as well as all other nations that have supported the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, offered assistance in the areas of military logistics and advice, and humanitarian assistance in order to gain victory against the terrorist gangs of Da'esh.

The Iraqi Government gave priority to the liberation of people before land, and thus to the safety and protection of civilians. The Council is also aware of the role of the supreme religious authority in Iraq, which produced a legal opinion, a fatwa, calling for jihad against Da'esh and giving great momentum to

the fight against the gangs of Da'esh and the fight to preserve the territory of Iraq.

Official entities in the liberated areas of Iraq are working to return life to a state of normalcy and to begin offering services, thus paving the way for displaced persons, of whom there are approximately three million, to return and resume their normal life. Iraq is therefore in dire need of the support of the international community to face the challenges imposed by this post-Da'esh phase in Iraq, achieve stability, rebuild destroyed infrastructure, and remove the mines and the ordinances planted by the terrorist gangs of Da'esh in the cities over which we have regained control. That is based on a comprehensive plan for reconstruction and domestic governance, which requires financial as well as technical support, and consultation with our international partners.

Iraq would also like to salute the humanitarian efforts of our sister nation Kuwait, particularly its relief initiative aimed at alleviating the suffering of displaced Iraqis. We also highly appreciate the efforts of friendly nations, of the European Union, and of the States members of the international coalition for the support and humanitarian assistance they have provided and for their readiness to support Iraq in achieving stability and reconstruction.

I would like to reiterate the critical and vital role that UNAMI can perform under its mandate, and the role of the United Nations country team in addressing humanitarian, social and economic challenges, as well as those in the fields of health and construction, assisting in the return of security, stability and essential services, allowing displaced persons to return to their homes, providing them with job opportunities, and allowing them to participate in the reconstruction of what the extremists have destroyed.

Iraq is a unified and independent federal State that enjoys complete sovereignty, based on a democratic federal Constitution that was adopted by all sectors of Iraqi society in 2005 through a popular, democratic and transparent referendum. It is based on full respect for and equality of rights and duties among all components of Iraqi society and affirms the values of civic engagement, political participation and effective political representation for all. The constitutional and legal rights of all are guaranteed, in particular with regard to the areas of politics, economics, society, culture and language. Few diverse nations can make the same claim.

Iraq affirms once again the importance of implementing the provisions of resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). To strengthen the rule of law and to prevent terrorists in Iraq from enjoying impunity, Iraq is currently considering the various alternatives in the global campaign to bring justice to Da'esh. Included is a draft resolution that we are considering with our partners regarding the collection of evidence pertaining to crimes committed by the Da'esh gangs in Iraq. We are also undertaking efforts to strengthen our sovereignty, to preserve the jurisdiction of our legal system and also to build capacities in that regard.

We once again reiterate that Council members must demand that Turkey withdraw its forces from Iraqi territory and that it respect the principle of good neighbourliness with Iraq in order to preserve and maintain international and regional peace and security.

The Iraqi Government is continuously working to strengthen its relations with Arab and neighbouring countries, in particular Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Turkey and Iran, in addition to continued relations with the Syrian Government.

To strengthen our brotherly relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Iraqi Cabinet has established an Iraqi-Saudi coordination council. The two countries have agreed to elevate bilateral relations to the required strategic level; to open new horizons of cooperation in various areas, including the political field, security, economics, development, trade, investment, tourism and culture; to invigorate the partnership between the private sector in both countries, in addition to combating terrorism and extremism in their various forms, eliminating the strongholds of terrorism, drying up its sources and eliminating its financing, while respecting the various relevant conventions.

To strengthen reconciliation, we are now hosting preparation meetings for the Mecca conference. Iraq remains committed legally and morally to locating the Kuwaiti missing persons, as well as the Kuwaiti archives and relevant documents. Iraqi ministries continue to work hard to document and scrutinize the information from witnesses, and continue to carry out field visits and excavations in different locations in order to find the remains of missing persons and Kuwaiti prisoners of war.

I should like to welcome the Council's response to the Iraqi Government's request to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq for one year based on resolution 1770 (2007), in letter and in spirit.

In conclusion, we express once again our gratitude for the work and efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, and his team in providing advice to the Iraqi Government in connection with its various activities, with a view to preserving the unity of Iraq, its territorial integrity and its stability in order that it may be free of terrorism. May Iraq live in safety, unity, strength, prosperity and stability in its democratic political system, and glory be to the martyrs who gave their lives to combat terrorism on behalf of all of humankind.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.